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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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INFO RUEHDL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 0744

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0596

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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 0420

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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1382

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G/TIP FOR MEGAN HALL

DRL FOR PETER SAWCHYN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/20/2017

TAGS: PREL PHUM ELAB EZ KN PL

SUBJECT: POLAND (QUIETLY) ENDING NORTH KOREAN LABORER  
PROGRAM

REF: 06 PRAGUE 104

Classified By: Classified by Acting Political Counselor David T. Morris  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) On February 16, Poloff met with Piotr Mierecki, Director of the Department of Migration Policy at the Ministry of Interior. Mierecki indicated that the GOP has taken a decision internally to end the North Korean work program, under which 25 North Korean welders are working at the Gdansk Stockyards. While the policy is neither formalized nor publicly acknowledged yet, an inter-ministerial group has decided that it will not renew existing work permits when they expire, nor will it issue future permits to new laborers.

12. (U) The North Korean worker situation came to light in Poland in March 2006, when the press reported that North Koreans were employed at the Gdansk Shipyards by the firm Selene Ltd., which outsourced labor to a DPRK company. Press reports indicated that the men often work up to 12 or 14 hours per day, sometimes seven days per week. As in the Czech Republic, almost all of the workers' salary was sent directly to the North Korean government. In response, the GOP dispatched the State Labor Inspectorate (PIP) to investigate working conditions and found that aside from some labor safety issues all was in order. Those safety issues--improper work clothing, no safety helmets, etc.--were promptly addressed by the employer.

13. (C) Post has made repeated inquiries to various authorities in the GOP over the last year about the DPRK workers. Officials at the MFA, MOL, Interior Ministry, and National Police (PNP) continually pled powerlessness in the matter, claiming that since there was a legal contract for outsourced labor there were no legal violations taking place. Privately, however, they admitted that the presence of what amounted to forced labor in Poland--at the very birthplace of the Solidarity movement, no less--was an embarrassment to the nation.

14. (C) Head of the PNP's Central Unit on Anti-Trafficking in Persons (CATU) Pawel Maslowski told Poloff that investigations showed that the North Koreans are living in satisfactory quarters and receiving decent nourishment. However, the workers go immediately from work to their barracks, never go out in public, and are told that their families back in the DPRK will suffer if they attempt to

defect. Attempts by the police to talk with the workers were refused and referred to the foreman.

¶5. (C) Mierecki stated that there is no concrete plan as to when the GOP will officially notify the DPRK or make the decision public.

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